

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: FWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime (406-461-0587)

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, September 3 - 10, 2010

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Boyd and Cavedon surveyed in the Yaak Valley area for the Candy Mountain pack and adjacent packs and visited with local homeowners who had been concerned about frequent wolf visits proximal to homes.

On or about 9/10, a female pup from the Murphy Lake pack north of Whitefish was radio collared.

Flights: None this week.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On 9/4, WS killed two wolves from the Monitor Mountain pack. On 9/5, two more were killed, completing the control work FWP authorized after WS confirmed a calf loss. This pack frequents the area where livestock are regularly and had recently been seen in cattle and around ranch buildings.

On 9/4, WS confirmed that a wolf or wolves killed another buck goat on private land north of Helena. Prior losses (1 confirmed dead goat and 1 confirmed dead sheep) led FWP to authorize removal of 3 wolves on 9/2. Control work is ongoing.

On 9/10, WS removed a black adult male from the Horse Creek pack south of Ennis. It is estimated that 1 adult and 2 pups remain. Efforts are ongoing for full pack removal.

On or about 9/10, WS killed a wolf from the Murphy Lake pack north of Whitefish as previously authorized by FWP.

Outreach and Education

See below for an update on Judge Molloy's ruling which reinstated Endangered Species Act Protections for the wolf throughout the northern Rocky Mountains. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for the latest information regarding what the ruling means for Montana, what changes and what doesn't. FWP's most recent media releases are also available.

Research Activities

Nothing new to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

On 9/9, FWP discovered the carcasses of 3 pups at a rendezvous site of the Silver Lake pack. USFWS and FWP are investigating.

FWP necropsy results from 2 pups found dead from the Cache Creek pack confirmed that the animals had not been shot. Cause of death remains under investigation and could be disease related.

Other Updates

Northern Rockies Delisting Litigation in Missoula Federal Court

On 8/20, FWP announced it would appeal the federal district court ruling that reinstated federal Endangered Species Act protections in the northern Rockies. The requisite documents are being prepared.

Background: On 8/6, federal Endangered Species Act protections were reinstated through a ruling from the federal court. The court ruled that the federal Endangered Species Act does not allow the federal government to subdivide a distinct population segment so that a species is listed in part of it and delisted in the other part. The ruling stated that the wolf must either be listed or delisted as one unit within the Northern Rockies region. Further, given that the current Wyoming wolf management plan and regulatory mechanisms are not approved by the federal government and are considered inadequate, federal protections must be reinstated throughout the region.

Wolves across northern Montana are now legally reclassified as federally endangered. Wolves across southern Montana are reclassified as experimental, non-essential. Different federal regulations apply to each area. See <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf> for information about the federal regulations and other updates.

Montana has been exploring options with the USFWS regarding ways to change management on the ground to reflect the wolf population's secure, recovered status and the need to manage the population through hunting. Work to develop options in the event of a relisting had already been underway and will continue.

Misc. Communications and FWP Commission Action

On 8/31, the FWP Commission unanimously passed a resolution regarding gray wolf relisting and future management. The Commission resolved the following:

1. The Commission strongly urges the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to appeal the Montana Federal District Court ruling that vacated the final delisting rule and reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountain region; and
2. The Commission demands that the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service outline a timely process to delist gray wolves in Montana with definitive deadlines; and
3. The Commission strongly supports FWP's efforts to pursue regulatory relief through federal permitting and rulemaking to allow wolf conservation hunts in 2010 and 2011, as outlined in a letter sent by FWP Director Maurier to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on August 31, 2010; and

4. The Commission strongly supports efforts to pursue federal legislative action affirming that indeed the intent of Congress was to enable the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement the federal Endangered Species Act in such a way that it could list or delist by populations of a species, in accordance with state boundaries.

On 9/3, Governor Schweitzer sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Salazar expressing similar sentiments as the FWP Commission and enclosed the FWP Commission resolution. The Governor also urged restoration of state management authority and expressed concern over some organizations urging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to re-start northern Rocky Mountain wolf recovery planning.

2010 Wolf Hunting Season

Because the federal court ruling reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for wolves throughout the northern Rockies, the 2010 Montana wolf hunting season is canceled for now. FWP is in the process of exploring ways to secure regulatory authority from the federal government to move forward with a fair chase hunting season.

Montana Livestock Loss Reduction & Mitigation Board:

The Prevention Subcommittee of the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Board met on June 4 to begin crafting the Prevention side of the Board's Mission and overall program. Work is ongoing with this effort, a Funding Subcommittee, and a Rules Subcommittee.

The Board's website is www.llrmb.mt.gov. Look under Board and Meetings on the left navigation bar. Agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available at [Montana Department of Livestock](http://montana.gov/livestock). The next regularly scheduled meeting of the full Board is expected to be October 18, 2010. The program coordinator can be reached at 444-5609.

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To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office: 657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp>. Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 444-5609.